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MOTHER BUNNY AND HER FLOWERS

Laura Rountree Smith

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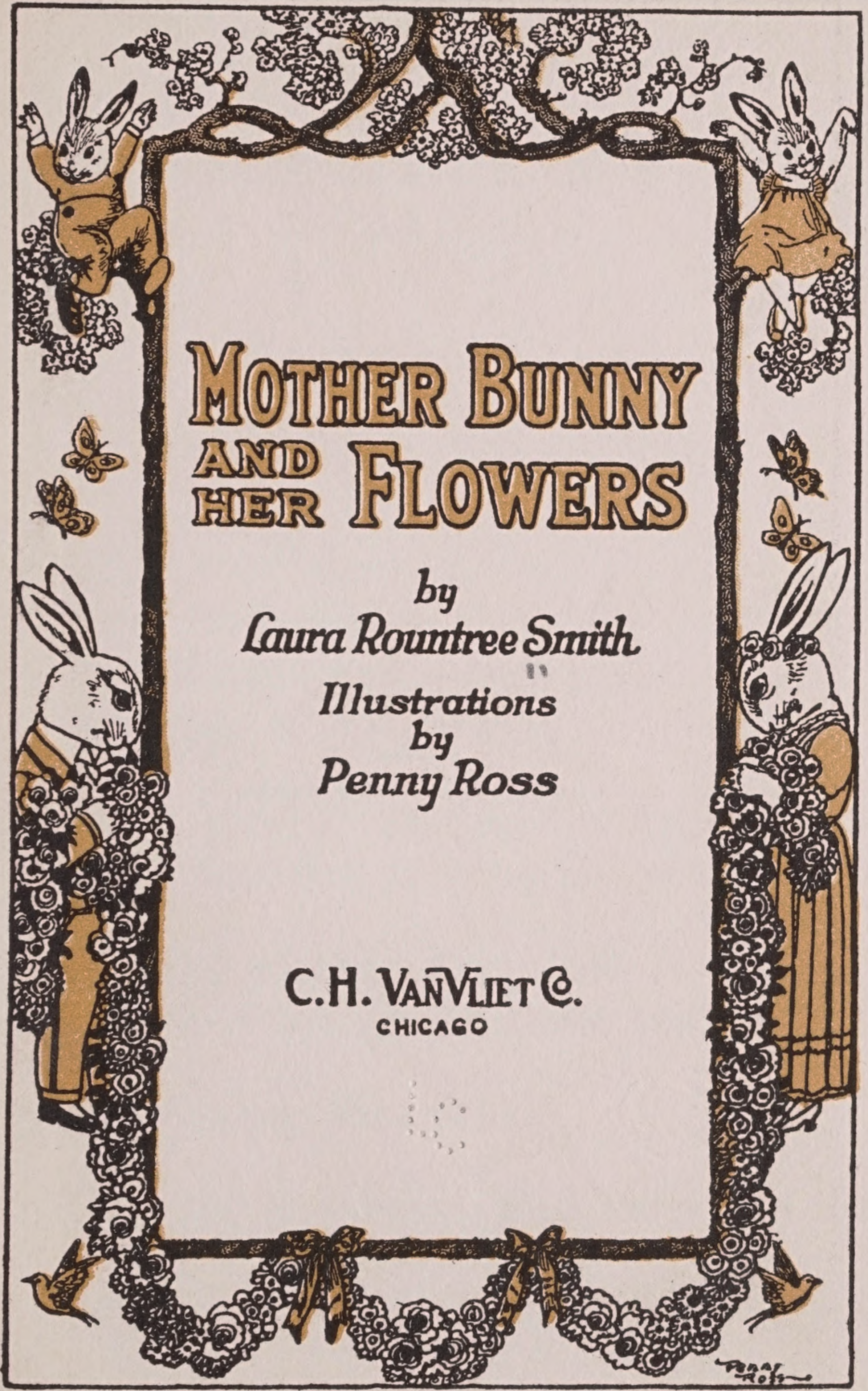
Mother Bunny and Her Flowers



MOTHER BUNNY AND HER FLOWERS

by

Laura Rountree Smith

Illustrations
by
Penny Ross

C.H. VANVLIET Co.
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MOTHER BUNNY AND HER FLOWERS

CHAPTER I

PLANTING THE GARDEN

Hark to the Tale of Mother Bun;
If you read on 'till the story is done,
You will have many happy hours
With Mother Bunny and her Flowers.

One bright spring morning Old Mother Bun was talking to herself.

Said Old Mother Bun, just for fun,
"It is time the garden was begun."

Old Father Bun cried,

"Time for the rake, and time for the hoe;
"We'll plant a garden in spring you know."

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny said,

"Garden days have come, we know;
May we help the seeds to grow?"

Old Mother Bun answered,

"To the garden all may go,
With the rake, and with the hoe."

So those cute little Bunnies ran out with rake, and hoe, and wheelbarrow, and they all worked in Mother Bun's garden, helping her prepare the soil for her garden. She was very happy and shook the packages of seeds in her gingham apron, saying,

"Vegetables and flowers too,
I will try to raise for you."

"Not for me, not for me," called a voice, and a very wild looking Bunny peeped over the fence.

He said, "At times I'm very plucky.
My name is really 'Happy-Go-Lucky'."

He offered to help, for every one loved Old Mother Bun, but he was such a careless fellow, he did not dig the rows straight, and Old Father Bun soon made him stop, so he sat on a fence.

When the ground was ready, Old Father Bun drove in stakes at the end of the rows, and he tied a cord from one stake to another so they could plant in even rows.

Old Mother Bun used the hoe and the little Bunnies ran after her and dropped in seeds.

"Oh, I forgot, and so, please stop,
Before another seed you drop."

"What did you forget, Mother Bunny?" asked Healthy Bunny.

"Can we help you to remember?" added Pretty Bunny.

"We are waiting," said Old Father Bunny.

Mother Bunny said, "Before we start,
Find out, in planting, how far apart."

She read the directions on each envelope to find out how far apart the seeds were to be planted, and how deep they were to be placed. This was important, for some seeds grow better planted deep, and some grow better planted near the surface with a very little dirt scattered over them.

That day she planted lettuce and radishes and Old Father Bun said,

“Such a very little our seeds have cost,
We will not worry about Jack Frost.”

Old Mother Bun said that early vegetables could stand a little frost and if we plant North-Grown seeds, the vegetables can even stand a little snow.

She continued, “If you please,
I will plant vegetable peas.”

It was late in March and the air was cool, though the sun shone warm and bright.

She said,

“I’ve planned my garden with much care,
But forgot to make paths, I declare.”

Old Father Bun said they would help her plan out the paths, and that Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny might use the wheelbarrow and bring over some bricks to lay in the paths.

Soon the garden began to look very well indeed.

Said Father Bun, "Let's have a talk,
How to plan out garden walks."

Old Mother Bun grew thoughtful and said,

"Let us make the walks so wide,
We can travel side by side."

They had plenty of room, so they made their brick walks, or paths as they called them, four feet wide.

Old Father Bun said,

"Now they look very well indeed,
But what will we do with grass and weeds?"

All the Bunnies sat down and put on their Thinking-Caps, for they had an old brick walk in the back yard, and grass and weeds crept up between the bricks every year.

The Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny said at last,

"I learned this from the Peddler's daughter,
Sow salt, and cover it with water."

The Cute Little Bunnies Ran Out with Rake and Hoe and Wheelbarrow

Old Father Bun remembered this was a good idea, but he said no salt must get into the garden soil.

Old Mother Bun said,

"I have plans now in my head
To make a pretty Flower Bed."

They divided off the part of the garden that was left, and planned out many pretty Flower Beds.

Old Mother Bun worked hours and hours,
Making a circular bed for flowers.

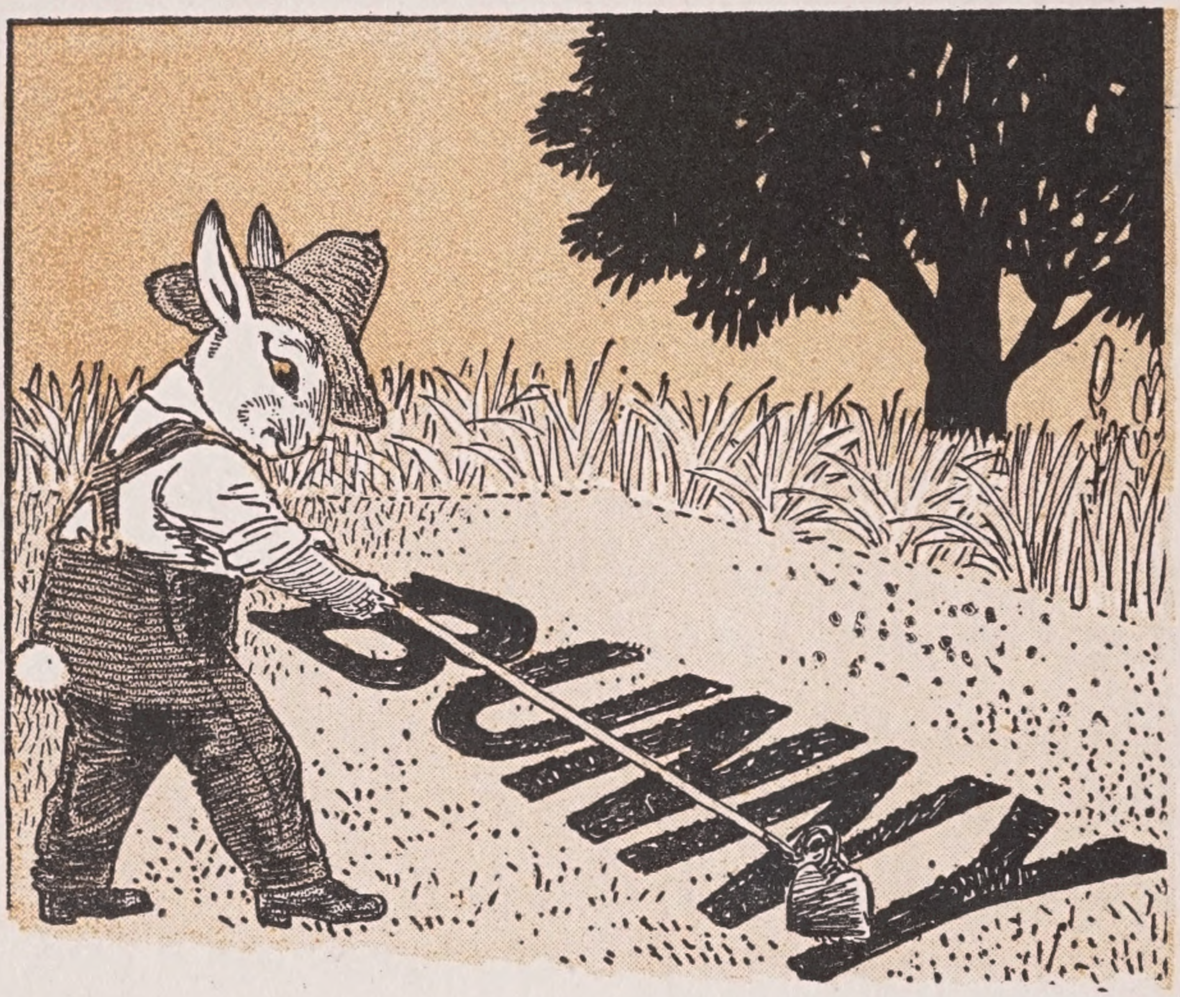
She was happy, I've heard said,
When she looked at her star-shaped bed.

She said, "Oh, see the star-shaped bed! Oh, see the garden we planted last year!" All of them bent down, and it was Old Mother Bun who discovered the first Crocus.

Sure enough, there was a purple Crocus in bloom. She said,

"I am so happy I'll sing and sing;
Here is a flower to greet the spring."

Old Father Bun did a lot of thinking and said presently,



“Ha, ha, I’ve an idea funny;
We’ll make a garden with letters
BUNNY.”

He marked off the letters on the ground and said they would plant there next day.

Old Mother Bun picked the Crocus and took it in-doors and set it in a vase. When they had washed their paws they sat around and admired it.

Old Mother Bun began to knit for she was never idle.

Said Mother Bunny, "Do you know
How to plant flowers and make them grow?"

She looked hard at Happy-Go-Lucky, who did not answer her.

Said Pretty Bunny, "As like as not,
I'll have to buy a flower-pot."

Pretty Bunny liked to have a blooming plant in the window.

Old Father Bun said,

"Flowers breathe air, I do declare,
With honest toil, they eat from the soil;
Though they stand still and cannot walk,
In Fairyland I heard them talk."

The little Crocus in the vase began to nod, and nod, and open its petals, and, to the surprise of all, began to talk.

The Crocus said, "Please do not doubt me;
There are many legends told about me."

Then the Crocus began to tell the story or legend she liked the best. She said, "I am the little child, Krokus, who was killed by an accident when Mercury threw a quoit one day, and I was changed at once into a flower." (Crocus continued)

"Here is a story to make you laugh;
I was hidden once in a hollow staff.
A Pilgrim stole a bulb, you see,
And took it to a far country;
So many flowers from it came,
Saffron Waldon is the town's real name."

"Saffron, Saffron, what do I know about Saffron?" asked Old Father Bun.

Old Mother Bun said,

"As sure as I am wide awake,
I use Saffron in cookies and cake."

The Crocus said, "Saffron is made from my stamens; several thousand of them are needed for one ounce of Saffron."

"Some Crocuses are not like me at all;
Some Crocuses also bloom in the fall.
In Persia—a far-off country you know,
The Saffron Crocus delights to grow.
I'll close up my petals in an hour,
But a hair-dye was once made from my flower."

So saying, the Crocus closed her petals and fell asleep.

Pretty Bunny said, "I wonder if every flower has a story to tell."

Healthy Bunny said, "Old Mother Bun, what kind of flowers will you have in your garden this year?"

Said Old Mother Bun, "How foolish you talk;
There'll be Hollyhocks by the garden walk.
The Perennials, you know, my dear,
Always live on year after year."

She reminded her children that Annuals, as they are called, grow from seeds and bloom only one season, while

Biennials live over winter and bloom the next year, and then die.

SAID OLD MOTHER BUN, "HOW FOOLISH YOU TALK"

Old Father Bun said,

"Let us learn one thing at a time;
Let us all make a simple rhyme."

He thought a while and then continued,

"An Annual is so named for the reason
It blooms and dies all in one season."

Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny said,

"I'll name an Annual; you see
The Morning Glory appeals to me."

Old Father Bun continued,

"The Biennials are rather queer;
They do not bloom 'till the second year."

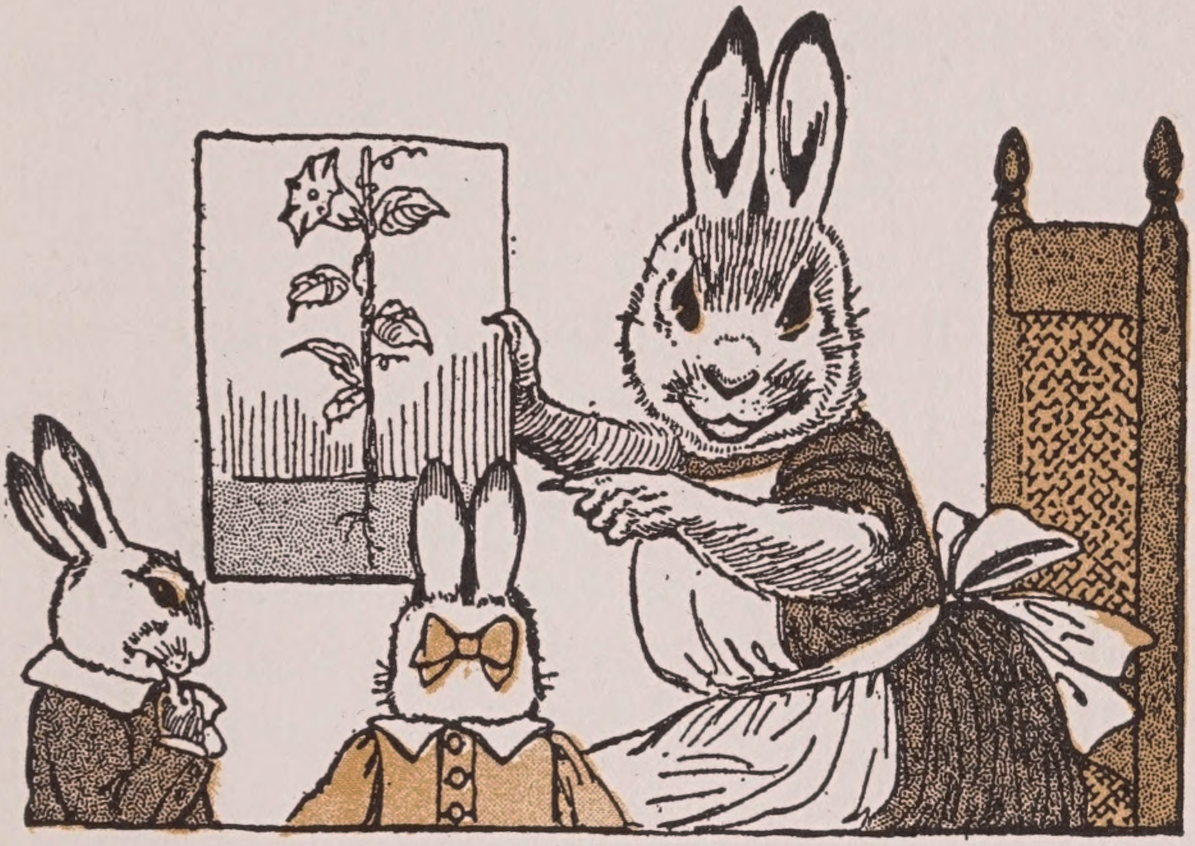
Healthy Bunny said, naming some Biennials, "How I do like turnips, beets and carrots, how I do like parsnips."

Old Father Bun continued,

"You'll know the Perennials, my dear,
For they live on year after year."

Pretty Bunny said,

"The Peonies and Hollyhocks
Are Perennials of which I'll talk."



Old Mother Bun said,

"I could teach you the parts of a flower,
In about a quarter of an hour."

The Bunnies drew close while she drew a picture of a Morning Glory and said,

"The parts of a flower, I do believe,
Are the roots, stem, and leaves."

She drew the little fine roots of the Morning Glory and the long, winding stem and dainty leaves and flower.

The Family Clock struck nine, and Old Father Bun said,

"I interrupt you, I beg pardon;
When may we visit your wild-flower garden?"

Old Mother Bun had been planting a wild-flower garden for years and years. The Bunnies had often gone to the woods and dug up a single plant of its kind for they did not want to rob even the woods of beauty, and so they had many wild flowers growing in their home garden, and they had also a lovely bed of ferns.

Old Mother Bun said,

"We'll visit the wild-flower garden and see,
Who our first visitor will be."

Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny jumped out the open window and ran out in the moonlight.

Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny went to bed.

Old Mother Bun tried to remember the names of some of her Flowers. She made what she called an "Acrostic" which spelled the names of Flowers read to the right, and spelled the name of a Flower downward. She wrote the following:

Crocus
Orchid
Wood-sorrel
Solomon's Seal
Lily
Indian Tobacco
Primrose.

The Old Family Clock sang,

"Tick, tick, tock, this I say
Your visitor is on his way."

Old Mother Bun went to bed wondering who her visitor would be in the Garden to-morrow. She made up her mind to rise at sunrise and see if any of her visitors had come.

She said,

"Some day, if I don't forget,
I'll make a Flower Alphabet."

The Family Clock remarked,

"Your ideas are very funny,
Good night, dear Old Mother Bunny."

CHAPTER II.

THE WILD FLOWER GARDEN

How many Wild Flowers do you know?
Can you tell the places where they grow?
Do you like these little rhymes so funny?
Do you like to meet Old Mother Bunny?

Bright and early Old Mother Bun went out to look at her Wild Flower Garden. She said,

"Trillium and Anemone,
Your little flowers I long to see;
Wild Ginger and Columbine,
You are also flowers of mine;
Lady's Slipper and Solomon's Seal
Many secrets will reveal;
Jack-In-The-Pulpit looks at me
Just as serious as can be."

As Old Mother Bun tip-toed about her Wild Flower Garden the flowers nodded their welcome and began to talk to her.

The Trillium said, "If you please,
All my parts are in three's.
You can see, when you have started,
Three petals, three sepals, stigma three
parted,
I have many happy hours,
Though I bear Solitary Flowers."

Old Mother Bun said, "I am glad you grow in my Garden, and I like the Solitary Flowers just as well as though they grew in clusters like those of Lily-of-the-Valley."

Just then Old Father Bun looked out the window and called,

"Old Mother Bun, I beg your pardon;
Who was the first visitor in the
Garden?"

Pretty Bunny just then called out,

"I'm coming out just for fun,
Old Mother Bun, Old Mother Bun."

Healthy Bunny cried,

"There is something makes me want to
sing,
Every year, in the early spring."

Just as Old Mother Bun began to think a member of her own family would be her first visitor she heard a whir of wings, and a humming sound, and a Humming Bird lighted on a Tulip.

The Humming Bird sang to her,

"I am happy as can be
Honeysuckle soon I'll see."

Old Mother Bun said,

"Many years that whir I've heard.
Welcome, little Humming Bird."

The Humming Bird went from flower to flower, finding honey and nectar in them. He said he came to visit the garden unusually early, as he was really a summer visitor.

The Anemones were the next flowers that wanted to speak. They said,

"We like to grow here in your bower.
Anemone, also called Windflower."

Old Mother Bun had to search for the flower on the Wild Ginger plant. There was a single flower well hidden beneath the velvety leaves. She gave a cry of pleasure, for looking up she saw a Yellow Lady's Slipper in bloom. The Lady's Slipper nodded in a friendly way and said,

"Our flowers are really a delight;
We are pink, showy, or small white."

She said there were three species of Lady's Slippers. She sang sweetly,

"In colonies we like to grow,
When the merry spring winds blow;
In the woods search for me hours and hours;
I carry from one to three pretty flowers."

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny and Old Father Bun came out and leaned down low to catch the faintest whisper from the flowers. The Solomon's Seal whispered,

"Many secrets I could reveal,
But my name is Solomon's Seal.
Please observe my bell-shaped flower,
Patiently growing hour by hour;
I am a Perennial, my dear,
But throw us a fresh stalk every year;
As my flowers with a scar they make;
You can tell my age by them without mistake,

In the woods we grow so tall, 'tis said
We tower sometimes above man's head.
Now, the False Solomon's Seal, 'tis true,
May appear more beautiful to you."

Just then Jack-In-The-Pulpit fairly shouted,

"I am Jack-In-The-Pulpit come to town;
I am dressed much like a Circus Clown.
Hidden beneath my six leaves green;
My suit is striped, as you have seen,
I am very glad to meet you all,
And I'll leave red berries in the fall."

A voice called merrily,

"To squeeze my stem you'd better refrain,
For everything I touch, I stain;
I make no exception for any one.
My leaf grows long after my flower is gone;
I am white with gold centre; does it pay
To bloom, as I do, for a single day?"

All the Bunnies examined the Blood root with the leaf circling round the stem, and the delicate flowers.

Old Father Bun remarked,

"Right down here, in this Fairy Bower,
Let us learn the parts of a flower."

Just then a beautiful Butterfly sailed by, and attracted by the color in the Tulip Bed, sailed down, so, as a Butterfly and Humming Bird came to the garden that day, Old Mother Bun said, "What fine visitors."

Old Father Bun said,

"I will try to teach you, if in my power,
To know and name the parts of a flower;
Calyx, corolla, pistils, and stamens,
Over and over let us name them."

Old Mother Bun said,

"The Calyx is really the flower-cup;
See the gay Tulips springing up."

Old Father Bun said,

"To describe is really beyond my power,
The Corolla is the prettiest part of the
flower."

Father Bun continued,

"The Stamens inside the Corolla grow,
And the pistils hold the seeds, you know."

Just then a shout arose and a voice called,

"I turn up at odd times, it is funny,
I am Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny."

They were all glad to see him, of course, and began to play a Flower Game. He stood in the centre of a circle they formed and said,

"Ha, ha, I'm very glad I came,
I'm thinking of a Wild Flower's name:
Clap him out, clap him in,
With letter 'V' the name begins."

He pointed to Healthy Bunny who cried, "Violet," and changed places with him, calling for a flower whose name began with another letter, as "D" for "Dandelion" or "Daisy." The game went on merrily. Every time after a flower was named the Bunnies skipped round the circle singing, to the tune of "Twinkle Little Star,"

"Flower Games we love to play,
In the spring when we are gay;
If you'll learn the Flower's names,
You can come and join our games."

They had such a merry time that they almost forgot to go in to dinner.

As they finally sat down to dinner a Fairy Voice called,

"I am Skunk Cabbage; for me make room,
I am the earliest Wild Flower to bloom.
I am useful to you, you see;
My root is used as a remedy."

Though the Bunnies liked Vegetable Cabbage they would not let the Skunk Cabbage in.

After dinner was over, Old Father Bun said, "I like to tell stories."

Old Mother Bun, who was something of a tease, said,

"Why don't you make that into a verse?
It may sound better, or may sound worse."

Old Father Bun thought a few minutes and then said,

"I like to tell stories about Flowers;
I could tell them for hours and hours."

Old Mother Bun had picked a Snowdrop and it nodded to them and whispered, before Old Father Bun could say another word.

The Snowdrop said a story was told about her being made from a snowflake as an angel breathed upon her, and this comforted Eve, with the mes-

sage of Spring, and so the Snowdrop became a flower of comfort and promise.

As the Bunnies grew thoughtful they noticed a few flakes of snow falling, and they saw that they took the form of beautiful snow crystals.

"Oh, oh," cried Old Mother Bun. "See the snow falling."

Old Father Bun said,

"The snow will not hurt your flowers, I know;
The snow will soon melt and make them grow."

Sure enough, the light fall of snow did not hurt the flowers at all, and soon the sun shone and Shadow Bunny called,

"Come out and play, come out and play;
Come and enjoy this fine spring day."

When evening came the Bunnies were so tired they went happily off to bed. Old Mother Bun told them a story about her Tulip Bed. She said she once heard a Folk-Tale about Old Mother Delight who went out one night with a lighted lantern in her garden, and discovered that the Fairies had hidden their babies in her Tulips for the night.

Mother Delight planted more Tulip Bulbs and the Fairies were so happy they brought her Good Luck.

Mother Delight looked at one of her Tulips and said, "You look so like a turban, I believe you were named from your resemblance to it, and you are so beautiful no wonder they hold a Tulip Festival in Turkey every year."

Old Mother Bun's voice grew lower and lower and sank to a whisper as the little Bunnies fell asleep.

They did not know at that very minute FIVE LITTLE FAIRIES WERE CURLED UP IN THE TULIPS IN THEIR OWN GARDEN.

These Fairies were named the Ticklish Elf, the Useful Elf, the Laughing Elf, the Impish Elf, the Pretty Elf.

The first letters of their names spelled downward made the name "TULIP."

If you read on you will learn what the little Elves did in Mother Bun's Garden.

Old Lady Bunny and Her Tulips

CHAPTER III.

MORE WILD FLOWERS.

Tulip Fairies, Tulip Fairies,
In your garments light and airy,
Tulip Fairies, we wish you well,
In the garden cast a spell.

Old Mother Bun called,

“Time to get up, I give fair warning,
Time to get up this bright spring
morning.”

The little Bunnies did not like to get up and the Elves in the Tulip Bed said,

“Let us come help, every one,
For we all love Old Mother Bun.”

The Ticklish Elf tumbled out of the Tulip Bed head first, and climbed up the water spout, and into the window where Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny were lying in their little beds.

He tickled their noses and tickled their
toes;
He made them good-natured, as you
would suppose.

The Useful Elf helped them dress.

The Laughing Elf set them laughing.

The Impish Elf hid their hair ribbons, and shoes, and played many tricks upon them.

The Pretty Elf just sat on the mantle piece and looked as pretty as pretty could be.

The Bunnies had a merry time and Old Mother Bun was happy when she saw her red Tulips, red and yellow, for the Elves had used their paint brushes to make the Tulips gay.

Old Mother Bun said,

"Here is also a pretty sight,
My dwarf dandelions close at night."

Her wild flower garden was bordered with little dwarf dandelions.

The Bunnies all went into the garden and the Elves disappeared.

Old Mother Bun said,

"In a garden we must not shirk;
There is always plenty of work."

So they began to pull weeds and talked about watering thirsty flowers.

Old Father Bun came out with a basket and said he was going to the woods to get Mullen leaves. He said,

"I will use the leaves for lamp-wicks, you know,
As the Greeks did once so long ago."

Old Mother Bun said, "Be sure to gather plenty of Mullen leaves, for I will soak them in oil and if any one gets a pain that will help them." So Old Father Bun went off singing,

"Mullen leaves, Mullen leaves
Are good for him who believes;
In witches' spell or Fairy art
Use Mullen leaves, and pain will depart."

The Sunflowers had been sowing their own seeds in Old Mother Bun's garden.

She was so glad to see them and knew they would attract birds who liked to eat the seeds.

She knew, too, that oil from them could be used to burn. She continued, that paper is made from stalk, head, and stem of the sunflower.

The Humming Bird came and sang,

"There is one thing I forgot to mention,
I am looking for a wild fringed Gentian;"

He said, "I have looked quarter of an hour
For this wonderful Sky-Blue Flower."

Sure enough, the Humming Bird greatly loved flowers of a certain color, and the Fringed Gentian was nearer the color of the sky than any Flower that grew. Best of all, the Gentian was really growing in one corner of Old Mother Bun's garden, and the Humming Bird hummed with delight.

The little Bunnies said,

"Perhaps each Elf wears an invisible cloak,
For time and again we thought they spoke."

They liked to imagine that the Elves from the Tulip Bed were about the garden in the day time, to help them.

Said Old Mother Bun, "Come and see
The buds upon the lilac tree."

The old Lilac bush was full of buds and Pretty Bunny picked a branch and

took it into the house, and set it in a jar of water.

Old Mother Bunny taught the Bunnies the names of all the Wild Flowers in her garden. There were the Violets and Anemones, the Blood-Root, and Dandelions, the Wild-Ginger and fringed Gentian, the Jack-In-The-Pulpit and Trillium, the Flax, and Mustard, and Lady's Slipper and many others.

Healthy Bunny whispered to Pretty Bunny,

"Every year Mother Bun begs
For a plant called 'Butter-And-Eggs.' "

They slipped away to look for this wild flower that grows by the roadside, but they were too early to find it in bloom.

They met Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny, and Shadow Bunny, and Homeless Bunny, and they all traveled together and sang,

"It is merry springtime if you please;
Buds are swelling on the trees.
A little more sun, a little more shower,
Apple blossoms will appear in an hour."

It was almost Apple Blossom time.

Shadow Bunny followed them around everywhere and said by and by,

"I am learning to talk in verse;
I'll tell you about the Shepherd's Purse;
The Flower is called 'Pick-Pocket,' merry Elf,
For this is a Flower that sows itself."

He explained that the farmer disliked this flower for sowing itself, and spreading over fertile soil they wanted for planting.

Just then, Old Father Bun returned with his pocket full of mullen leaves and he said he brought home a bouquet of dandelions. He had buttercups, too, in his basket. He said that he found buttercups all over the meadows and they were not liked by cows or horses because of the bitter juice they contained. He said as nothing troubled the buttercups, they bloomed freely everywhere. He had gathered marsh buttercups, creeping buttercups and bristly buttercups.

He said he found some common flax growing a foot and a half high. The blue flowers were pretty and he said it was a most useful plant, linen being made from its fibres, and oil from its seed.

He said while resting in the meadow the Flax told him this story: “The Earth Goddess Hilda comes to visit us. She comes to the earth to see how much Flax is planted, and returns by winter to see if there is enough Flax for spring and if the spinning wheels are all busy. She rewards the busy people and punishes the lazy ones.”

After supper the Bunnies gathered round the bunch of Dandelions Old Father Bun had gathered, and one Dandelion, larger than the rest, began to talk. It said, “Once upon a time the South Wind loved me, for I was then a young girl with yellow hair, and for a while I grew more and more beautiful; but by and by I grew old and faded, for I was touched by a breath of the North Wind. The South Wind sighed, and soon I was gone, but the next year the ground was covered with flowers like me. I am now said to resemble the sun, and, like other flowers, turn toward it."

The Bunnies drew and colored a picture of the dandelion and wrote the story in a little book to keep.

Old Mother Bun called just for fun,
"Come to the window, every one."

The Evening Primrose was opening. It was uncurling its petals for the visit of the night moth.

Pretty Bunny said, "I wonder if it will be the cradle for a wee little Elf, as the Tulip is."

Healthy Bunny said, "I know a funny thing about it. Its root was used to eat, long before that of the sweet potato."

Said Old Father Bun, "It amuses me quite,
Some flowers open, and some close at night."

A dwarf dandelion in the garden sang,

"Little Fairies I will invite,
For I, too, close at night."

There was music in the garden for the Harebells were ringing; they sang of the "Bluebells of Scotland."

Old Father Bun said,

"A wheelbarrow I'll buy or borrow,
To help you do more work to-morrow."

Old Mother Bun replied,

"We will be busy indeed, I know,
We have so many seeds to sow."

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny went off to bed singing,

"Little Elves in our Tulip Bed
Have painted them all yellow and red."

Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny and Homeless Bunny had gone away, but they begged to be allowed to come and plant next day.

Just as the little Bunnies were falling asleep there arose a voice, and they knew that spring had surely come, for the dear Little Tree Toad, who ate harmful insects, called,

"The Tree Toad by the garden bed,
Has many secrets, it is said.
I am not useless, I beg pardon,
But eat insects from your garden;
I sing and sing and seldom stop,
As I go about hippety-hop."

The Ticklish Elf peeped in the window early next morning and tickled the Bunnies with a bit of grass, calling,

"Let us go to the garden of Old Mother
Bun;

There will be fun there for every one."

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny got up quickly and dressed and the Ticklish Elf said, as the Bunnies complained that the grass tickled their toes,

"The grass is my friend, for, goodness knows,
I belong to the family of Tickle Toes."

"Are there Fairy Families and Flower Families?" asked the Bunnies in surprise.

The Ticklish Elf did not answer the first part of the question but went off singing,

"The Mint Family and Holly Family,
The Night Shade and Gentian Family,
The Rose and Nettle Family,
Are known to the Elf
Who lives all by himself."

So saying, he floated away on a sunbeam and the Bunnies cried,

"Hurrah for the Elf, we have learned, you see,
Each Flower belongs to a Family."

CHAPTER IV.

ROOTS OF A PLANT—THE LEGEND OF COTTON.

"Every plant, as I believe,
Is composed of Root, Stem, and Leaves;
When the planting time is done,
Let's study them with Old Mother Bun."

Every one was hurrying next day to finish the seed planting. There were Morning Glory seeds and Nasturtium seeds to plant by the porch. There were Pansy seeds to plant in the little round bed by the front door. There were seeds of Bachelor's Buttons and Mignonette.

Suddenly Old Father Bun came with a flag from the house and shouted,

"Here is an idea, perhaps it's new,
Let's plant a flower bed, red, white and blue."

"A red, white and blue garden," said Healthy Bunny.

"A red, white and blue flower bed," said Pretty Bunny.

"Red, white and blue, red, white and blue," sang the Bunnies together. Echo Bunny called, "Red, white and blue."

Old Mother Bun helped plan the red, white, and blue flower bed. She said, "We can have Salvia for the red flowers, and Daisies for the white. For the blue flowers we can have Forget-Me-Nots, or Phlox, Blue Bells or Gentians." She said, "Where did you get the idea?"

Old Father Bun said,

"I took one cabbage, I hope he'll pardon,
From Mr. McGregor's splendid garden.
Then I saw he had the idea, too,
Of planting his flowers red, white, and blue."

The Bunnies went to work in real earnest on the red, white, and blue flower bed.

When they grew tired working, they played this flower game.

Old Father Bunny stood in the centre of a circle.

Father Bunny pointed to any Bunny in the circle saying,

"How do you do? how do you do?
I think of a flower whose color is blue."

He called on any Bunny who had to name a blue flower or go out of the game. A different color was called for each time and they sang a little song to the tune of "Lightly Row,"

"Pink or blue, pink or blue,
Little flowers, how do you do?
Pink or blue, pink or blue,
Other colors too,
Yellow, orange, red or white,
Pink or blue, pink or blue,
I can name, can you?"

Shadow Bunny, and Homeless Bunny, and Happy-Go-Luck Bunny helped them play the game. Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny could not always name a flower quickly.

Those five little Bunnies stood in a row and watched Old Mother Bun plant her garden, then as a little shower came up all came inside but Shadow Bunny who called,

"I hope you will have lots of fun;
I always vanish with the sun."

Said Old Father Bun, talking half to himself,

"Best of all I like the fruits,
But to-day let's study roots."

He said the root is the simplest part of the plant and he said a plant has a primary root which it sends down into the soil, and some plants also have secondary roots which spring from the stem.

Some time before Old Mother Bun had planted a sweet pea. She had stretched a piece of netting over a glass with water in it, and had placed the pea on top of the netting.

The Bunnies saw the roots growing downward.

Mother Bun said to her son and daughter,

"Roots will grow in earth or water."

The Bunnies decided to plant some seeds in this way and watch the roots grow.

Mother Bun said, "See the early shoots;
I also like to watch aerial roots."

Pretty Bunny said, "What are aerial roots?"

Healthy Bunny said,

"It seems to me now, I do declare,
Aerial means something about the air."

They remembered that they had learned about Swallows being called "aerial birds," because they spent so much time in the air, and so they asked eagerly where they could find some aerial roots.

Said Old Father Bun, "Early this morn,
I saw them on stalks of the Indian corn."

Old Mother Bun had read of a wonderful tree in India which sent out aerial roots.

She said,

"On the Banyan tree, aerial roots are found,
Which grow from the branches to the ground."

Old Father Bun said,

"Some air plants, I do declare,
Send their roots into the air;
They live on air, as you can see,
And belong to the Orchid Family."

Old Mother Bun remarked,

"The roots about us honestly toil,
To absorb water from the soil."

Old Father Bun said in the Nature world about us everything had work to do, and everything had to do its part.

A wee voice was heard calling,

"I'm a Useful Elf, a Useful Elf;
May I come in and talk myself?"

Healthy Bunny went to let the Useful Elf into the house.

The Wee Elf shook the water off his tiny leaf umbrella and called merrily,

"Ha, ha, please let me explain,
Flowers grow in sun and in the rain."

He said he had been waiting under a toad-stool to keep dry. He had noticed the open window and so thought he would come in a while. He continued,

"I shake water off my rubber boots,
Much to the delight of the fibrous roots."

Pretty Bunny inquired, "Do roots have names?"

Healthy Bunny said, "Do fibrous roots like water?"

The Useful Elf nodded and remarked,

"Fibrous roots, so I've heard said,
Look much like slender threads;
Fleshy roots drink water up,
Also store up nourishment;
Try to think, don't talk like a parrot,
See the tap-root of the carrot."

He produced a tiny basket filled with carrots and they had a feast. When his basket was quite empty he said,

"There are three kinds of tap-roots I know—
Beet, radish, and turnips—in that way grow."

To the surprise of all, the basket was soon filled with vegetables again and the Beets called in loud voices,

"We're stout and gradually taper down;
We're the conical roots, just come to town."

The Radishes blushed and said,

"We are spindle-shaped, we might as
well tell;
We taper downward, and up as well."

The Turnips were not to be out-done by the rest so they cried,

"To the tap-roots we belong;
We are turnip-shaped, wider and long."

Those funny little vegetables began to dance, and the Useful Elf began to dance, and soon the Bunnies were all dancing as though by magic.

When they had danced themselves

quite out of breath they sat down in a circle and begged the Elf to tell them a Fairy Tale.

He said,

"To get me started, I beg pardon,
But mention something in your garden."

He looked hard at Old Mother Bun, for her garden was famous to all Elves and Fairies.

She said,

"We have many visitors, let me see,
I will mention the Bumble-Bee."

The Elf said the same little verse looking hard at Old Father Bun,

"To get me started, I beg pardon,
But mention something in your garden."

Old Father Bun mentioned a Butterfly and a Toad, a Robin and an Oriole, a Moth and Dragon Fly, but the Elf screwed up his wee face into many wrinkles, and it was only when Pretty Bunny cried out that he got started, and you see for yourself now what she mentioned.

"Oh, little Elf, wait just a minute;
I saw a web with a spider in it."

The Elf capered about and cried out,

"I have to wind the machinery in my
head
By that word 'Spider' that you said."

He began to tell the Fairy Tale of Cotton, saying,—Once upon a time there was a Fairy forever spinning,

If you called for breakfast, supper,
dinner,
You never saw so great a spinner.

She was continually spinning from morning 'till night,

Her Uncle had willed her, too, you see,
For a spindle, the sting of a Bumble Bee.

There was another spinner who lived near the Fairy. He was an enormous spider with stripes upon his back. He did not like to think the Fairy was a more wonderful spinner than he, so he decided to kill her. She was frightened and began to run, carefully hiding her spindle, and the spider ran after her.

She came to the house of a wee gray
Mouse
And said, "May I rest in your little
house?"

The Mouse was busy eating cheese and would not open the door of his house.

To the Tree-Toad she told her plight,
He said, "Call on me some other night."

You might guess a long time before you could tell who at last befriended the Fairy. It was a Firefly at last who led her onward by his fairy lantern. He showed her a pink flower and told her to jump inside. She did so, spindle, spinning wheel and all, but the ugly Spider was almost upon her.

There was nothing left for the Fairy to do but to stab him with the spindle, so she did so, and the ugly spider fell to the ground. Then the pink flower closed over the Fairy.

Though the ugly Spider wove a web over the flower he could not get in. He said,

"Now I give to all fair warning
I will catch the Fairy in the morning."

Time passed, the Fairy did not come out. The flower lost its petals, still no Fairy was seen.

The ugly Spider died but the Fairy was alive and well hidden in the ball the flower had made. The ball opened soon and out came a pure, white tassel the Fairy had been spinning!

We love to think of the industrious Fairy now when we wear a garment made of cotton.

The voice of the little Elf sank lower and lower and soon the little Bunnies were fast asleep. He sang,

"I wonder how much they've heard, I said,
I must go back to the Tulip Bed;
There is fun for me and every one,
In the garden planted by Old Mother Bun."

CHAPTER V.

LITTLE ELF LAUGHTER

Mother Bun is happy, I've heard it said,
When she looks at her pretty nasturtium bed;
The geraniums are also blooming well,
And each one has a story to tell.

When the Tulips had finished blooming for one season, the little Elves who had rocked to and fro in them liked Mother Bun's garden so well that they found other flowers in which to hide.

"Ha, ha, ha," sang Little Elf Laughter,
"Here is the flower I'm looking after."

He settled in a bright, red nasturtium for a nap.

Next day he was here, and there, and everywhere.

When Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny were a little cross at breakfast, he climbed a morning glory vine and peeped in the window, and screwed up his face into a thousand wrinkles.

He looked so sorrowful that the Bunnies laughed in spite of themselves.

Later, when Old Father Bun looked quite fierce because he could not find his pipe, little Elf Laughter sang,

'I am Little Elf Laughter, Little Elf
Laughter,
I can find what you're looking after."

When Old Mother Bun was fretting about the house cleaning, the Little Elf called,

"Ha, ha, ha, with laugh and song
I will help the work along."

When they were all merrily working in the garden and a sudden shower came up, he would sing,

"Ha, ha, ha, let's never scold,
Some one may find the pot of gold."

"The pot of gold?" said Old Father Bun.

"The pot of gold?" inquired Old Mother Bun.

"Where is the pot of gold?" asked Pretty Bun.

Then, with a merry laugh, Little Elf Laughter told the story of the pot of gold at the rainbow end.

The Nasturtium bed was full of bloom; the pretty flowers nodded to and fro.

"We like to grow in this bed each year,
Pick us as soon as we appear,
And there is one thing we might mention,
We really need very little attention."

Sure enough, the Nasturtium bed needed little attention after the seeds were once planted, and the Humming Bird came saying,

"To me, the Nasturtium bed is sweet,
I always find here quite a treat."

The Geraniums fairly shouted,

"Little Elf Laughter, we're glad you came;
Geranium is our general name.

Our seed-pod is like the beak of a bird;
We're named from a word meaning
'stork', we've heard."

Little Elf Laughter said, "The seed pod on this flower does look somewhat like a stork's bill, I think."

Healthy Bunny said, "Are all kinds of Geraniums the same?"

Pretty Bunny said, "They have different colors. I know that much."

Little Elf Laughter ran to one Geranium and pressed the leaf between his tiny fingers. It smelled a little of peppermint. He said, "This is the Peppermint Geranium."

The flowers were white on this plant, and the leaves were very velvety.

The Rose Geranium sang,

"I am very happy, as you suppose;
My leaves when pressed smell like a Rose."

Little Elf Laughter pressed another Geranium leaf tightly and sang, "The leaves on this plant smell of pennyroyal."

The Ivy-Leaved Geranium did not want to remain unnoticed, so it called,

"See my Ivy-leaves, what do you think!
Some of my flowers are red, some pink."

Little Elf Laughter knew the garden and all the flowers in it well. He pointed out the horse shoe marks on the leaves of some of the Geraniums and said,

"Here's a different Geranium, as you see;
It belongs to the Horseshoe variety."

Next, they saw some showy flowers and Little Elf Laughter said,

"Our Geranium list is almost done;
Here is Lady Washington."

Just then, a voice called,

"Here I am, I'm a late-comer,
Purple Verbena, I bloom all summer."

There was a great stir in the Poppy Bed and the Marigolds looked very splendid beside a tiny white flower called Love-In-The-Mist.

Little Elf Laughter cried, "Ho, ho,
See the Pansy faces in a row."

All the Bunnies loved the Pansies for the brave little fellows sprang up early, and bloomed late, and were not afraid of frost or cold.

While the other Bunnies picked flowers, Old Father Bun ran to and fro and finally said,

"Here is the spot, we'll give it a trial;
Here is the place for my new sun-dial."

He was planning to measure time by a sun-dial. He had a metal plate and dial plane which was marked off to show directions of shadows at different hours.

The first sun-dial known was spoken of in one of the books of the Bible, Isaiah, and the sun-dial is older than any clock or watch.

He said a moon-dial was made to measure night hours by showing the shadow of the moon or stars.

Patter, patter, patter, fell the drops of rain.

Old Mother Bun said,

"Into the house we'll go again;
My flowers grow in sun and rain."

Into the house they went, and Old Father Bun said,

"Flowers, shrubs and trees, as I believe,
Always have roots, stems, and leaves."

Old Mother Bun said,

"You will notice the stem, if you're wide awake,
And see the direction it will take.
An erect stem grows straight up, you see,
Straight and upright as can possibly be;
An ascending stem, slanting from the ground,
By the Bunnies is very often found.
We don't have to search very far to find
Another kind of stem that is declined;
A decumbent stem is also found,
The lower part upon the ground;
A climbing stem with tendrils, too,
Some day I'll introduce to you."

The Bunnies knew many climbing stems and shouted, "Grape-Vine, Ivy, Trumpet-creeper, Pea, Gourd." They also talked about round and square stems.

Old Mother Bun said, "What Flower Legend shall I tell to-day?" She went on in verse,

"What Flower Legend shall I tell?
I know and love all flowers well."

The Bunnies thought for some time, but it was Little Elf Laughter who suggested,

"Drink Motherwort and you'll live long,
So goes the Legend and the Song."

Old Mother Bun said, "In far-away Japan, a stream runs down a hill where motherwort grows, and the story goes that people who drink water from that stream are always young. The Japanese hold a festival called 'The Motherwort Festival,' and they have a drink made from this plant."

By and by the rain was over and the Bunnies went off to look for the rainbow end, for they wanted to find the pot of gold.

Old Father Bun sat comfortably in his arm-chair and his head went nid-nid nodding as he said over and over,

"Old Mother Bun has happy hours,
With new and old-fashioned flowers."

Old Mother Bun went out into her garden.

All the flowers were happy because of the shower.

Suddenly she heard Little Elf Laughter singing,

"The pot of gold at the rainbow end
May be found near home, my friend."

Old Mother Bun looked down at the end of the garden, and there, sure enough, she thought she saw the rainbow end. She began to dig and dig, and she did strike something bright and shining. She found a wee pot of gold, and whether it belonged to the rainbow end, or the Elves, she did not stop to ask.

She peeped inside and said, "I will tell no one yet what I have found; I will tell no one yet what is inside."

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny came home tired.

Old Father Bun said,
"Did you find the pot of gold?

Though you are tired, please do not scold.”

Old Mother Bun said,

“I’ll show you the pot of gold in a minute,
But please do not ask me what is in it.”

The Bunnies begged Old Mother Bun to tell her secret.

CHAPTER VI.

LEAVES AND A FLOWER ALPHABET

Trees in Mother Bun's garden grow
With many kinds of leaves, you know;
But the little pine tree here
Is evergreen throughout the year.

"A picnic, a picnic," cried Old Mother
Bun.
Let us go on a picnic just for fun."

Old Father Bun winked his eyes and twitched his long ears to and fro and said,

"Would you leave your garden for an
hour?
You might miss a bud, a leaf or
flower."

He liked to tease Mother Bun about her flowers.

Pretty Bunny cried, "Do let me go and get Homeless Bunny and Happy Bunny, and Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny and invite them all to go with us to a picnic."

Healthy Bunny said, "I will pack our lunch pail."

Just then a wee little voice cried,

"Ha, ha, ha, I'll help you myself,
I came from the Tulip, the Impish Elf."

The Impish Elf came in and jumped into the butter dish and left the tracks of his little feet all over the oil cloth."

Old Mother Bun said,

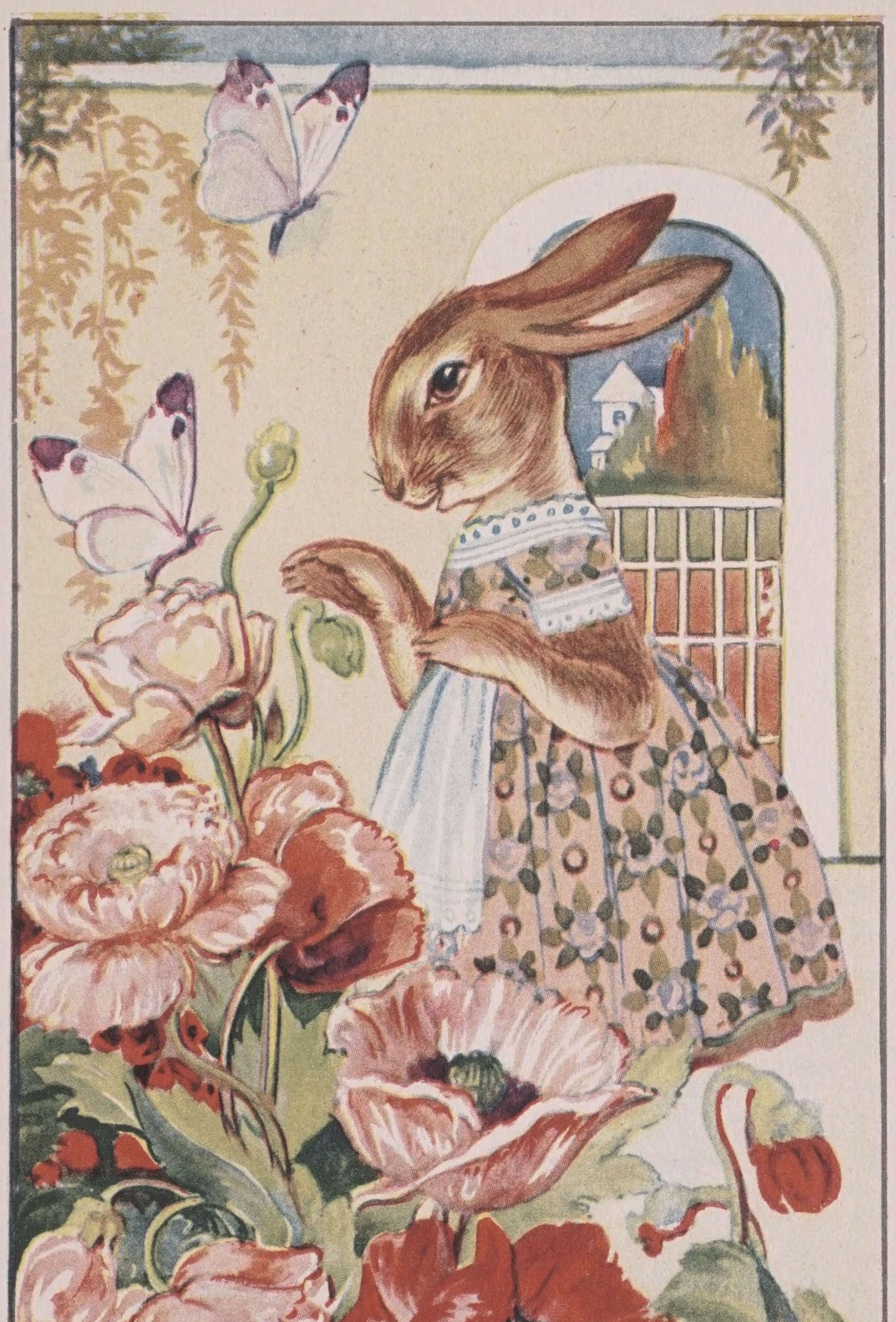
"Don't play tricks on any one;
Don't play tricks while I am gone."

"Can't I play a trick on the tree-toad or dragon fly or on the little white butterflies?" asked the Impish Elf.

Just then Pretty Bunny saw little white butterflies sailing over the poppies and sang to the tune of "Twinkle Little Star,"

"Butterflies, how do you do?
Butterflies sail two and two,
Oh, you are a pretty sight,
Butterflies so pure and white."

The Bunnies went to the woods for their picnic and after they had lunch



Oh! You are a Pretty Sight
Butterflies So Pure and White!

Old Father Bun told about some Dryads that lived in the trees.

"Hark! what is that?" cried Healthy Bunny.

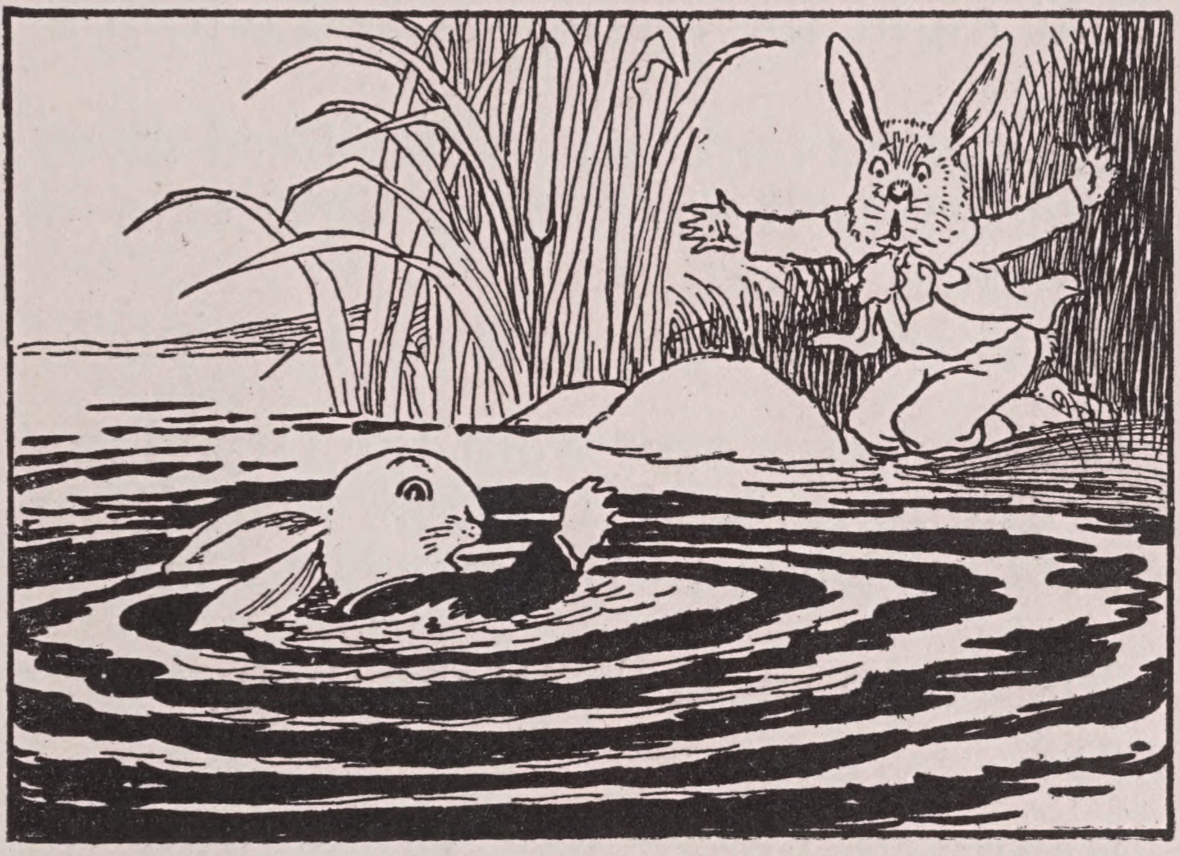
Click, click, click, like a key,
Sounded near them in a tree.

The tree-trunk opened and there stood a Woodland Fairy. She smiled and said, "I will tell you a story about a Nymph who once lived in an oak tree. She belonged to Ceres, a goddess of long ago. One day a man ordered the oak, in which she lived, to be cut down, though every one begged that it be saved. As the woodmen would not cut it down, the lord who owned the place seized the ax and cut it down himself. Then the Nymph pronounced this magic upon him, 'He can eat and eat but will always be hungry.' " As she finished her story the Nymph disappeared in the tree.

The Bunnies tapped on many tree-trunks to see if another Nymph would come out. They heard a voice call,

"Ha, ha, ha, let me out,
All day long I sing and shout."

The voice came from another oak tree, and looking below it, the Bunnies found



a key and unlocked a door in the tree and out came a Dryad with another story to tell.

She said,

"A statue of the Virgin, long ago,
Was placed once in an oak, you know.
A shepherd before it his flute would play;
From a church the statue he'd taken away.
He was sentenced to prison for theft, you see,
And the statue taken out of the tree.

That night the statue walked out, they
say,
And let the imprisoned shepherd away.
I hope you'll remember this tale of
mine,
Because the image became a shrine."

Back into the tree went the Dryad and the Bunnies said, "What wonderful stories we learn in the woods to-day."

Just then a call "Help, help," was heard.

Happy-Go-Lucky had fallen into the stream and Homeless Bunny was trying to get him out.

They all ran as fast as they could and by and by rescued him; then Old Father Bun built a fire so they could all warm their paws and whiskers.

Picking up a branch from the Linden tree Old Mother Bun said,

"The blade, foot-stalk and stipules see,
The parts of the leaf upon the tree."

The Bunnies drew near her to see the branch she was looking at.

Old Father Bun said,

"Here is something that I've found.
Leaves are simple, or compound,
Simple, when in one piece, 'tis said,
Compound, when more pieces in the blade."

The Bunnies gathered leaves about them. They saw that some wereParallel-veined and some were Feather-veined. Some of the veins in the leaves ran side by side, and some of them branched out. They saw some wild grape vine leaves that were still different; they had three main ribs and veins extending out from them. They were called Radiate-veined.

Old Mother Bun said,

"We would be here 'till set of sun,
If we studied leaf-shapes every one."

Old Father Bun's eyes twinkled and he said,

"Leaves have different margins too;
Some of them I'll introduce to you."

Then the first surprising thing happened!

The wind blew a great blast and down fell many leaves. They made a gay carpet.

The little Bunnies cried, "What fun!
It is almost as though autumn had come."

Then the second surprising thing happened! For they were in a fairy woodland. Every leaf began to talk, and by placing it to the ear each Bunny could hear what it wanted to say.

One leaf said,

"My shape is Linear, longer than wide;
I could tell you other things beside."

Another voice cried,

"I am Lance-shaped, to a point I taper;
The wind plays with me many a caper."

Another voice cried,

"I am not nearly as broad as long;
Tell it in verse, I am called oblong."

The Oval leaf spoke, and the Ovate-leaf, the Heart-shaped leaf, and the

Kidney-shaped leaf, the Arrow-shaped leaf and the Ear-shaped leaf, and then the third surprising thing happened!

The breeze sang merrily,

“So many times before we have met,
Let us have a Flower Alphabet.”

In trooped Flower Fairies wearing dresses like real Flowers. They formed a circle, dancing and singing,

“Amaryllis is my name,
Bouncing Bet, I’m glad I came,
Here are the Canterbury Bells,
Daisies blossom in the dells,
Everlasting flowers in the spring,
Four O’Clock, hear the wee bells ring,
Geraniums grow in the garden bed,
Hollyhocks hold high each head,
Iris is a jolly fellow,
Jack-In-The-Pulpit is black and yellow,
Knottweed is a pretty pink,
So the Tiger Lilies think,
Marigold, Marigold,
Nasturtium loves her, so I’m told,
Oxalis or wood-sorrel,
With Peony had a quarrel,
Quaint, indeed, is Prince’s Father,
Red-Hot Pokers grow together,
Shepherd’s purse with fairy money,
Tobacco plant, thinks quite funny,
Uvularia perfoliate is the lily,

Verbena says hard names are silly,
Water-cress says to yellow-eyed grass
Xyris flexuosa is a hard name, alas!
Yarrow, that common roadside flower,
Zinnia says will bloom many an hour."

The merriest flower of all was the Daisy and she sang,

"Perhaps some one will explain,
When you make a Daisy-chain,
Why you can count for hours and hours,
In my centre tiny flowers!"

Just then the fourth surprising thing happened!

A great wind came up and blew Homeless Bunny over hill and dale. It blew Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny over hill and dale and up onto Primrose Hill. It blew Shadow Bunny to the end of Nowhere. The little Bunny family it blew safely home to their own door-step.

Each Hollyhock raised a stately head,
But not a single word they said;
Growing by the garden wall,
They did not seem surprised at all.

When the Bunnies got inside, the table

was neatly set for supper, and a wee voice cried,

"I've come to live with you—it's funny,
But my name is Stay-At-Home-Bunny."

Old Mother Bun said,

"I know that we will love you, honey;
I'm glad to see you, Stay-At-Home-Bunny."

Old Father Bun said,

"Stay-At-Home-Bunny, I beg pardon,
Have you looked at Old Mother Bun's garden?"

The Stay-At-Home Bunny winked her eyes and nodded her head. She whispered to Old Father Bun,

"For hours and hours we'll have to make
A very wonderful Birthday Cake,
Or else at the store we'll have to try
A wonderful Birthday Cake to buy;
So, come early and enjoy the fun
At the Birthday Party of Old Mother Bun."

Old Father Bun looked wise and said,

"No wonder I look old and wise,
Next week we'll have a fine surprise."

CHAPTER VII.

A BIRTHDAY PARTY

A Birthday Party is lots of fun,
So come and see Old Mother Bun.
To her party then let's repair;
We all will have a good time there.

When Old Mother Bun's Birthday came Old Father Bun said,

"I must pat you, so I am told,
As many years as you're years old."

Old Mother Bun went and hid in the closet.

Pretty Bunny said,

"I've a present for you, Mother Bun;
Come out now and enjoy the fun."

Old Mother Bun peeped out of the closet and saw that Pretty Bunny had brought her a new table cloth.

Then Healthy Bunny came hippety-hop;
He said, "I bought this at the shop."

He gave Old Mother Bun a new breakfast cap.

Old Father Bun said, "I declare,

Here's a new rocking chair."

Old Mother Bun was so pleased with her presents that she did not hear the bell go "tinkle, tinkle, tinkle."

By and by a voice cried,

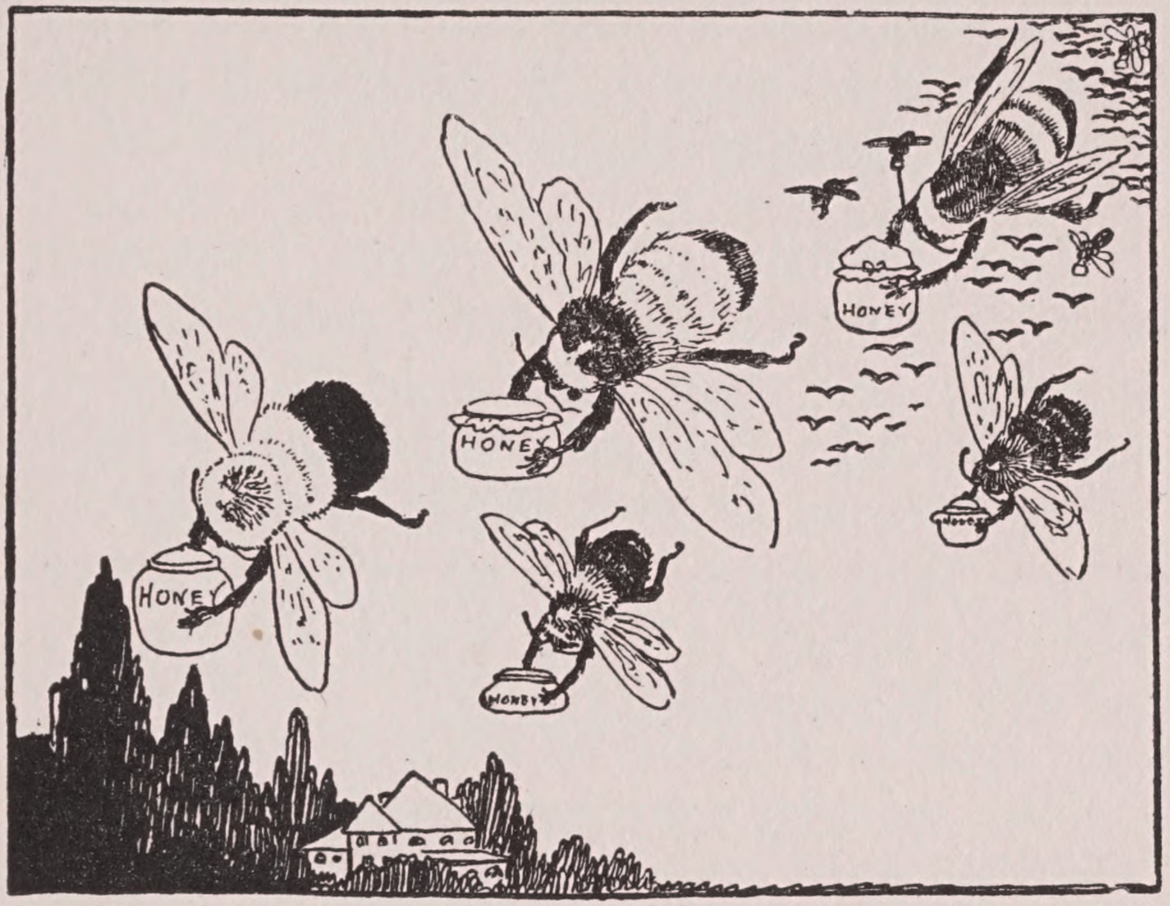
"Old Mother Bun, we beg your pardon,
But here is a party in your garden."

Into the garden trooped the Flower Families.

There was the Pink Family, and the Geranium Family, and the Mint Family, the Sunflower Family, and the Primrose Family. The Nettle Family even peeped boldly over the fence!!

Old Mother Bun said, "I made a mistake;
I never thought of a Birthday cake."

Then all the Bunnies shouted and out came Old Father Bun with a Birthday Cake with many candles upon it.



All the visitors did not arrive on time.

The Butterflies came in handsome dresses and brought Old Mother Bun a new mirror.

The Birds came bringing her a new song book.

By and by an old Peddler came singing,

“I am a Peddler with a heavy pack;
Of Birthday presents I have no lack:
To stay at home I have no knack;
I am a Peddler with a heavy pack.”

The Flower Families crowded around the Peddler and each bought a present for Old Mother Bun.

The Peddler had many interesting stories to tell, and the Pretty Elf told stories, and the Marigold Family told stories, too. The Pool-Flower had a word to say; the Water-Dragon and Mary Bud said, "Let us relate our own story, please." They were all members of the Marigold Family.

One of the members of the Marigold Family said, "Once Caltha fell in love with the Sun-god and looked up at him day after day. All night she waited for the first rosy hint of the sun's coming. She became a spirit reflecting the sun, and she turned into a Marigold."

As it grew late, one member of the Marigold Family cried,

"The Witches are coming, the Witches
are coming;
We had all better hide;
The Witches are coming, the Witches
are coming;
They soon will take a ride."

One and all the Flower Families went home, and Echo Bunny who had come at the last minute called, speaking of the Witches, "a ride, a ride, a ride."

Old Mother Bun said,

"The Ragweed is out, without a doubt,
The Witches soon will all come out."

Sure enough, five and twenty witches came in the twilight and pulled up five and twenty stalks of Ragweed and rode away singing,

"We search in the highways and the ditches;
We are very little Witches;
On Ragweed, we say, we'll ride away,
A year and a day, a year and a day."

The Pretty Elf said a magic charm,
And so the Witches did no harm.

Old Father Bun said,

"The party is over, but let me say,
I wish you happy returns of the day."

Old Mother Bun said,

"Let's gather some leaves; from what I
hear;
We are very near the fall of the year."

They gathered leaves and went inside and warmed their paws by the fire.

The little Bunnies noticed that the leaves did not all look alike. They were different in size, form and color.

The Pretty Elf sang,

"Each leaf a fairy is, in pretty gown;
Each leaf a fairy is, come to town.
So close your eyes, if you are wise,
And I will give you a surprise."

The Bunnies did as they were told, and when they opened their eyes each of the leaves they had gathered held a fairy.

Maple and oak leaves, yellow and brown,
Gay little play leaves, dancing down,
down.

One leaf with a smooth edge said,

"To talk in verse is very fine;
My margin is an even line."

Another leaf, with a fairy in it, cried,

"I am jagged beyond belief;
I am called a saw-toothed leaf."

Another said,

"I am wavy in margin, as wavy can be,
There are many kinds of leaf like me."

Still another leaf called,

"Let me tell you before we start,
My blade is cut up into parts;
So that my verse may not be one-sided,
Let me say we are lobed, cleft, parted,
divided."

Each little fairy from the leaf danced to Old Mother Bun and left a present.

Just as the Bunnies were wondering if it were bed time, a "rap-a-tap" was heard and in came the Peddler singing,

"I have traveled again hours and hours
To see Mother Bunny and her Flowers."

Old Mother Bun gave the Peddler a fine supper and asked him to stay for the night. He said, after supper,

"I have in my pack a little book;
Bunnies, peep in and take a look."

Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny thought it great fun to peep into the Peddler's pack, and by and by they drew out a wonderful book all about Flowers.

It had one chapter called, "Uses of Plants."

The Bunnies read aloud,

"Plants are useful, we declare;
They help purify the air.
Food for animals they yield
In the meadow and the field:
From seed and fibres, we believe,
Clothing is made, and from mulberry leaves;
They help make fuel, which makes light,
You'll learn when these lines you recite;
Don't forget, before we're done,
To mention their use for medicine."

Old Father Bun said,

"I take off my hat to Old Mother Bun;
I am serious, not in fun:
Mother Bun's Flowers so useful appear,
I hope they will grow year after year."

The Pretty Elf danced to and fro,

"Their perfume is a delight to me,
To every Butterfly and Bee;
That plants are useful is a surprise;
I thought they were to delight the eyes."

Healthy Bunny said,

"Old Mother Bun, I love flowers, too;
I will help weed the garden for you."

Pretty Bunny said,

"Old Mother Bun, I'm a faithful daughter;
I will help the flowers to water."

They invited the Peddler to stay with them and he almost consented. He said at any rate he would give them the book about Flowers.

When the Bunnies were falling asleep, they heard a gentle "pitter, patter,"

Said Old Mother Bun, "What can be the
matter?"
The Peddler traveled down the stairs,
Saying, "I hope nobody cares;
I never had place for my abode;
I travel off to the Song of the Road."

Next morning the little Bunnies looked under their pillows and each found a little booklet. One was shaped like a daisy and one like a buttercup. On each was written an invitation to a Flower Show. The invitation read,

"We invite you—this is the reason,
To view plants in and out of season,
So hoppety-skip away you'll go,
With Mother Bun to the Flower Show."

Old Mother Bun said next day,

"We're happy as happy can be, you
know;
We're off and away to the Flower
Show."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLOWER SHOW

"'Tis very jolly fun, you know,
To travel to a Flower Show,
So come and join us, every one;
We're off and away with Old Mother
Bun."

One fall day Old Mother Bun said,

"Off and away we soon will go
To the City Flower Show."

Old Father Bun said,

"Wait until my Scarecrow is made;
The crows are in the corn, I'm afraid."

He went out to make a Scarecrow.

Old Mother Bun called anxiously,

"You'll bring on yourself some disaster,
If you step on my bed of asters!"

Old Father Bun put up two sticks in the garden and nailed a board across.

He put a hat and suit of clothes on his Scarecrow. The Scarecrow looked very life-like when he was finished.

One Bunny thought he could hear him
walk;
"I'm a Scarecrow and I must learn to
walk,
If not wise when you sleep or rise,
Some day I may take you by surprise."

At this very instant Old Mother Bun called,

"Father Bun, did you hear what I said?
Don't tumble into my Aster bed."

She was so afraid Father Bun would not notice where he was going and disturb some of her flowers.

Old Mother Bun loved her fall flowers, so she called again,

"Of my Petunias have a care;
Father Bun, don't step there."

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny went out and gathered Golden-rod and brought it home, and set it in great jars by the front door. The Golden-rod said,

"By the road I grow, but this I know,
I sing it over, hour by hour,
I sing it over hour by hour
I am your chosen National Flower."

Even as the Golden-rod talked, the song-finch and song sparrow came to see if there were any seeds ready for them.

Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny came in sight with a surprise for Old Mother Bun. He had a basket full of the little plant she wanted for her wild flower garden called, "Butter-And-Eggs."

These little plants trembled all over when they were transplanted into Mother Bun's garden.

The Butter-And-Eggs said,

"We are curious as you know,
We came from Europe long ago;
We'll tell some secrets by and by;
Our flowers are often used for dye."

Happy Bunny came hoppety-skip along shouting,

"Who will go, who will go
To the pretty Flower Show?"

They could not see Echo Bunny but a voice called, "Flower Show."

Homeless Bunny and Shadow Bunny came with their baskets and cried,

"The time is creeping on, you know;
Let's all start to the Flower Show."

The Stay-At-Home Bunny said, "I beg pardon,
But I will weed a while in Mother Bun's garden."

The Bunnies all took rakes and hoes and began to weed the garden. They sang to the tune of "Lightly Row," as they worked.

"Rake and hoe, rake and hoe,
Weed the flowers and help them grow;
Rake and hoe, rake and hoe,
Jolly fun you know.
By and by come pleasant showers,
All to help the thirsty flowers;
Rake and hoe, rake and hoe,
Help the flowers grow."

Soon everything seemed ready and they started off to the Flower Show, when Old Mother Bun turned her ankle and feared she could not walk another step, so they set up a wail,

"Another step she cannot go,
Alas! alas! for the Flower Show."

Old Father Bun got a wheelbarrow and they took turns wheeling her.

When they came to the Flower Show they saw rooms and rooms filled with Cactus and many curious flowers.

The Pitcher Plant had each little pitcher partly filled with water. It said,

"I tell you I like boggy ground;
I am glad you came around;
Insects get in and laugh and shout,
But I seldom let them out."

Pretty Bunny peeped into the Pitcher Plant and saw something sticky on the inside and hairs pointing downward which made it hard to get out.

Old Mother Bun was much interested in the Cactus, and reaching out its thorns, it cried,

"In the desert go look for me;
I can store up water, you see.
Of our 600 species I shout aloud;
I can draw around me quite a crowd.
Many things this plant affords,
Among them fodder, fruit, and cords."

All the flowers were beautiful and each one had a story to tell.

Old Father Bun bought a great basket of chrysanthemums to take home. One very large flower said,

"Old Father Bun, do you hear me sigh?
 There are no Chrysanthemums in
   Himaji."

This flower said that Chrysanthemums grew all over China except in this one place, because it was not thought lucky to raise them there.

The story goes that a great man once had a servant who took care of his gold plates, and one day one gold plate was missing. The servant was so afraid that she threw herself in a well, and her ghost comes every night at the stroke of nine to count the gold plates.

All about the Flower Show were quaint figures, some of them made entirely of Chrysanthemums.

On their way home the Bunnies met Mistress Mary and she was so contrary she would not tell how her flowers were growing. She only said,

"The rose is red, the violet blue,
  The Gillyflower sweet—and so are you."

She looked at Old Mother Bun, for everyone loved her.

The Bunnies were so tired Old Mother Bun began to tell them a story, as some of them rode in the wheelbarrow and some of them trudged along.

"There once was a wooden rocking horse,
And I can tell you the story, of course."

She continued: "Every night he went to Sleepy Town and one night he saw Father Bun so sleepy that he said,

"On the Rocking Horse you can go,
Trot, trot, trot to Dreamland, you know."

Soon they met Shy Squirrel and Sleepy Sparrow and they all flew on the back of the Rocking Horse.

All night long, all night long,
The Rocking Horse sang his good night song."

At this very minute in the telling of the story there appeared a ROCKING HORSE in the road, and the Bunnies got on his back and left the old wheel barrow in the road.

Said the Rocking Horse, "I beg your pardon,
But I want to rock into Mother Bun's garden."

Soon they all arrived and the Rocking Horse rocked all about the garden and though they begged him to stay for the night he went off singing,

"On the Rocking Horse you can go,
Trot, trot, trot, to Dreamland you know."

Next day Old Father Bun was so busy outside that Old Mother Bun inquired,

"What are you doing in the garden?"
Old Father Bun said, "Since you ask it,
I am making an in-door basket."

He planned to put rich earth and slips in it and hang it up in the window.

He said,

"Autumn is coming in this world of
ours;
Jack Frost will freeze and tease the
flowers."

Already the Bunnies had gathered flower seeds.

Already they had gathered vegetables and put them in the cellar.

Many plants wanted to be potted and taken in-doors.

"Don't forget me," called each flower-
pot;
"I'll hold a flower, as like as not."
The window-box cried: "Your next trip,
Come and place in me another slip;"
The Bulbs said to the Bunnies, son and
daughter:
"Plant us in earth or plant us in water."

They planted some Bulbs in water and watched the long white roots grow downward day after day, while the green stalks shot upward.

That night Old Mother Bun was sitting up late when she heard a voice call,

"Old Mother Bun, Old Mother Bun,
Look at your Scarecrow, just for fun."

She looked out and saw the Scarecrow dancing to and fro and a Wee Elf peeping out of each pocket.

She put on a shawl and went into the garden.

Old Mother Bun went to her Pansy bed,
"We grow the more you pick us," they said.

Old Mother Bun picked a basket full of Pansies to send to a sick neighbor the next day.

She said, "Some pansies I'll give away;
I will send some to sick folks every day."

"Every day," called Echo Bunny.

The Pansies must have heard what Old Mother Bun and Echo Bunny said, for next day the bed was full of bloom.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREEN HOUSE BUNNY

"Mother Bunny, if you please,
Tell us of your Flowering Trees,
And we'll join in laughter funny
When we meet the Green House Bunny."

One afternoon Old Mother Bun had worked so hard in her garden that she fell asleep, and she thought instead of autumn it was springtime, and that she heard all her Flowering Trees talking together.

The Redbud Tree said,

"My flowers are pretty, every one believes,
And I put out my pink flowers before
my leaves."

The Silver Bell Tree laughed and its laughter sounded like a bell going "tinkle, tinkle, tinkle."

The Catalpa Tree sang,

"The wind shakes my branches, hours
and hours;
Down they fall, my big white flowers."

The Witch Hazel Tree said,

"I love to bloom in this garden of yours;
See my flower-parts, in fours."

The Hawthorn Tree said,

"Spring time's a happy time, every one
believes;
I put my flowers out, after my green
leaves."

A voice sang,

"Ha, ha, ha, now we see
Flowers on the Nutmeg Tree."

The Nutmeg Flowers grow on an evergreen tree.

The voice continued,

"If spices are among your needs,
I'll tell you that we grow from seeds;
After we sprout as like as not,
You'd better put us in a pot;
Transplanted then with care, you see,
We'll grow into a sturdy tree;

Soon we'll be growing safe and sound,
And bear fruit all the year around."

Old Mother Bun was wakened from her dream by hearing a voice call,

"Wake up, wake up, at any cost,
We must haste before Jack Frost."

Old Father Bun had many flower-pots in a row, and the little Bunnies were helping him pot Geraniums.

He said,

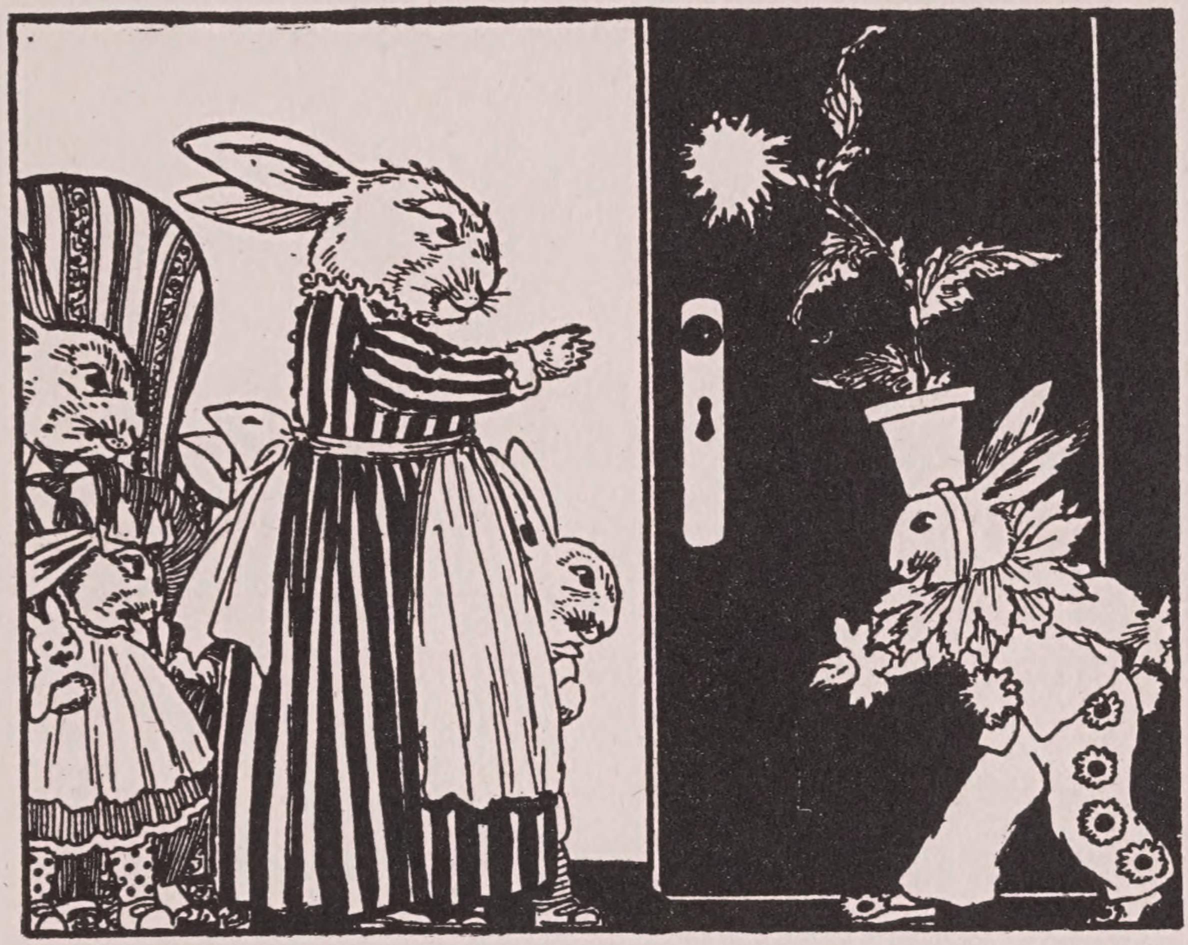
"Dig up the roots with much dirt around;
They will hardly know they have left
the ground."

Old Mother Bun said, "I had such a wonderful dream! I thought it was springtime."

That evening as they sat by the fire, they heard some one call,

"Rap-a-tap, rap-a-tap,
Let me in, it's no time to nap."

They opened the door and the cutest little fellow stood, hat in hand, saying,



“Ha, ha, you may think it funny,
But I’m called the Green House Bunny.”

He told Old Father Bun there were plenty of bricks in the back yard to start in building the Green House, and there were some old window-lights that would do for the hot beds.

Next day they all set to work in real earnest and began to build.

Old Mother Bun began to think of selling her flowers.

She wrote cute little cards saying,

"Come and see what I have new;
Chrysanthemums I introduce to you."

Many of the potted plants fairly trembled in their pots as they thought of having a nice warm place to spend the winter in and a real Green House.

The little Bunnies were planning one corner for their bulbs. They were planning to plant slips in a bed of sand.

The Green House Bunny sang to the tune of "Yankee Doodle,"

"If you will plant a slip each day,
I'll tell you what we'll do, Sir.
If you will plant a slip each day,
We'll soon have something new, Sir!"

Chorus:

"If you'll learn to name them all,
There's no way of knowing,
In the springtime or the fall,
Pretty flowers are growing."

The Green House Bunny remarked,

"Before I go on my vacation,
I want to talk about propagation."

Old Mother Bun said,

"Green House Bunny, before you go,
Will you tell us how plants grow?"

The Green House Bunny answered,

"I like plants better far than weeds;
They multiply by buds and seeds."

He took the Bunnies out into the garden and bent a branch down to the ground. He cut a notch in it, and covered it with earth. He said it would root by and by and could be cut off then from the main branch.

He said we could also make plants grow from slips, seeds, and bulbs.

As they went back into the Greenhouse, the Green House Bunny showed them a picture of a water-lily, saying, "A Water-Nymph hides in the shape of a water-lily, and becomes a beautiful maiden when she chooses and,

"A naughty little water-sprite
Lives under the leaves from morn till night."

The little water-sprite tries to play tricks on any one who gathers the Water-lilies."

So saying,

The Green House Bunny went hippety-hop,
Off and away to his own little shop.

Old Mother Bun said,

"We Bunnies will have capital fun,
For now our Green House is nearly done."

Old Father Bun said,

"Off and away to the woods I'll go;
I'll bring back treasures, as you know."

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny went with him, and my! what treasures they did find to bring back!

They brought gay autumn leaves, and milk-weed pods, and wild grapes, and nuts, and they sang,

"Autumn time, autumn time,
Merry hours in every clime,
Autumn days, autumn days,
See the bonfire's purple haze."

All went merrily with the Bunnies until Pretty Bunny grew ill. She was sleepy all the time and nothing seemed to interest her.

The sunshine said, "I will wake her."

The raindrops said,

"I'll tinkle, tinkle on the window pane;
I will make Pretty Bunny laugh again."

Pretty Bunny did not laugh at the rain-drops.

What next happened do you suppose?
There crept on a vine a little late rose.

It crept up, up, up, and peeped in at Pretty Bunny and inside the rose was curled up Little Tickle Toes, the merry Elf.

He tickled her toes and tickled her nose,
And made her happy, as you would suppose.

Soon Pretty Bunny was well and helped Old Mother Bun protect her roses, and cover the fern bed and soon snow fell on Old Mother Bun's garden, but the flowers in the Green House were blooming merrily, and many customers came to buy.

"Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle," went the Green
House Bell,
How many times a day I cannot tell.

Nearly every house in Bunnyville had a blooming plant in the window.

Old Father Bun went off every evening into his little work-shop. He kept up a great singing and humming and all the Bunnies wondered what he was doing. He said to himself,

"I have been working hours and hours
To try to make some paper flowers."

He took a Tulip petal, and traced around it on card board and used this as a pattern. He cut many petals from red crepe paper for his Tulips. He placed wire between two paper petals and glued them together, then he wired all the petals together and put a little yellow round on the end of his stem, which he wrapped with green paper.

While he was doing this, Old Mother Bun had some fun of her own. She cut

out some birds and butterflies of pasteboard and painted them gayly. She fastened them on twigs and set them around in the flower pots.

When Old Father Bun came out with his paper Tulips everything looked very gay.

Late that night, when the rest of the

Bunnies were sleeping, Old Mother Bun looked out into her garden covered with snow. She sighed for her flowers but a fairy voice called,

"Don't let me ever find you weeping,
For your flowers are only sleeping,
Safe in Mother Nature's keeping."

The Moon peeped out from a cloud and said,

"On your garden I am streaming,
Airy, fairy moonlight gleaming,
While your little flowers are dreaming."

A little star twinkled and hummed,
"I twinkle, twinkle in the blue,
And a watch I keep for you,
Because I love the flowers too."

The Sun-dial showed the days were getting shorter and shorter.

It said,
"After winter comes the spring;
In every season let us sing,
And just be glad of everything."

Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny dreamed that night that they were sailing away, away, in milk-weed cradles.

CHAPTER X.

A FLOWER PLAY FOR ANY DAY.

Old Mother Bun went to her garden bed;
"Pansies are really blooming," she said.
"Mid sun and shower, in half an hour,
We'll see many a dainty flower."

The winter had been hard and long.

Old Mother Bun had patched and mended the Bunnies' clothes, and Old Father Bun had mended and patched the furniture, and, except for visitors to the Green House, they had seen little of the outside world.

One morning the Pansies lifted their heads and the Crocuses began to grow. Said old Mother Bun, "I sing and sing, For all these flowers are signs of spring."

Old Father Bun heard the Birds singing and he said,
"All the Birds are on the wing,

Their songs are truly signs of spring."

It was at this very minute that Healthy Bunny said,

"Hear that noisy clitter-clatter,
What, indeed, can be the matter?"

The March Hare came bounding in the window.

He upset the cups and saucers and spilled the cream from the pitcher.

"I run here, and there, and everywhere;
I am the jolly Mad March Hare."

He was so noisy it was some time before Old Father Bun's voice could be heard. He said by and by,

"Can you suggest anything
To help celebrate the spring?"

The March Hare turned two somersaults and said,

"I may be here, I may be away,
But why not give a Flower Play?"

"Hurrah, hurrah," cried Pretty Bunny.

"Hurrah, hurrah," cried Happy-Go-Lucky Bunny.

Shadow Bunny said, "I hope you will give the Play on a sunny day, so I can be there."

The Friendly Tree Toad chirped,

"You will have to buy costumes for your play;
Really Bunnies, I see no other way."

The Bunnies sat down in a circle and put on their thinking caps, for they had no dimes or pennies with which to buy costumes for the Flower Play.

Suddenly, without any warning whatever, Old Father Bun began to laugh and Old Mother Bun began to laugh, and Healthy Bunny said,

"Old Mother Bun, you never told
What you found in the pot of gold."

Old Mother Bun got the pot of gold she had found at the rainbow end, and took off the cover. Out rolled more gold pieces than you have ever dreamed of!

She had forgotten all about the pot of gold.

Now, they could buy costumes for the Flower Play.

They began to think about the Play.

The March Hare said he would be the Clown, and the Tree Toad said he would be ticket-seller.

They built a real little stage in Old Mother Bun's Garden, and they studied their parts until one bright May day when the sun shone warm and bright, the March Hare gave the prologue and the Play began on the day set for it:

"We do not need to beg your pardon
For giving a play in Mother Bun's
Garden;
The sun is bright, the scenery right,

And so our neighbors we invite;
The Flowers we introduce to you,
In their costumes bright and new;
We are a little nervous; this is the reason,
Frost comes sometimes out of season;
We've just begun to have much fun
In the Garden of Old Mother Bun."

The Play then began.

Pansies. "See, we are the Pansies with happy faces and kind thoughts. We do not fear Jack Frost. We do not fear a little snow. We will dance for you and sing for you."

1st Pansy. "Are any of our enemies about?"

2nd Pansy. "Are there any insects and bugs to worry us?"

3rd Pansy. "There is no sign of our enemy, Hail."

4th Pansy. "Oh, we must hide; here come real enemies, the Careless Children! Some of them will step on us, some of them will pick us with such short stems we will be useless."

Careless Children—

"We are Careless Children, oh me, oh my;
To be careful we never try.
We do not mind what any one's said;
Ha, ha, let's go to the Pansy bed."

March Hare—

"Ho, ho, ho, don't you dare;
I'm the bad little, sad little
Mad March Hare!"

Careless Children—

"We beg your pardon, we beg your pardon;
We see we are in Mother Bun's Garden!"

Hollyhocks—

"We love the Birds and love the Bees;
We have few enemies, is you please."

Song, tune "Lightly Row."

Hollyhocks, hollyhocks,
Growing by the garden walks,
Hollyhocks, hollyhocks
Hear their merry talks,
Red and yellow, pink and white,
Standing in the bright sunlight,
Hollyhocks, hollyhocks,
Growing by the walks.

Insects (humming behind scenes)

"We are insects, if you please,
We destroy Flowers and Trees."

Tree Toad.

"No, no, no, I beg your pardon;
You'll not destroy them in Mother Bun's Garden.

I am a Tree Toad, with work to do;
I will call useful Sparrows too."

Sparrows—

"We'll drive the insects all away,
Mother Bun, for you;
We'll drive the insects all away,
And this is what we'll do;
We'll sing and play as well we may,
And enjoy our holiday."

(The Tree Toads give a little dance).

Daisies (dancing in pairs).

"We're Daisies who dance,
We lightly advance,
And skip in two's, if you please;
We're Daisies who dance, and lightly advance,
We love the Birds and Bees."

Hail.

"I'm old King Hail, I seldom fail
To give some one a fright;
My hail stones come, a tum, ti, tum,
At morning, noon, or night."

March Hare.

"I'll put you to rout, without a doubt;
You're just a rough old roustabout."

(They have a battle and Hail goes out.)

Little Elves rise from Tulips at the back of the stage singing to the tune of "Twinkle Little Star."

"Flowers are blooming everywhere,
Sweet Bird songs are in the air,
See their colors gay unfurled,
Spring has come o'er all the world."

March Hare.

"I cut up some capers, I do declare,
I am the comical Mad March Hare,
If you like our play, we say,
Call on us another day."

The little Play was over and all the visitors went home.

Old Father Bun said,
"I'll sit down now in my arm chair,
And smoke away with never a care."

"Will you?" said the Scarecrow in the garden.
"Will you?" cried the Sun Dial.

Old Mother Bun said,

"I'll sit down and knit a heel or toe;
I'll sit down and knit an hour or so."

"Will you?" they all cried.

Suddenly such a rapping and tapping was heard, such a stamping of feet that all the Bunnies went to the door to see what was the matter.

There was a surprise party for Mother Bun!

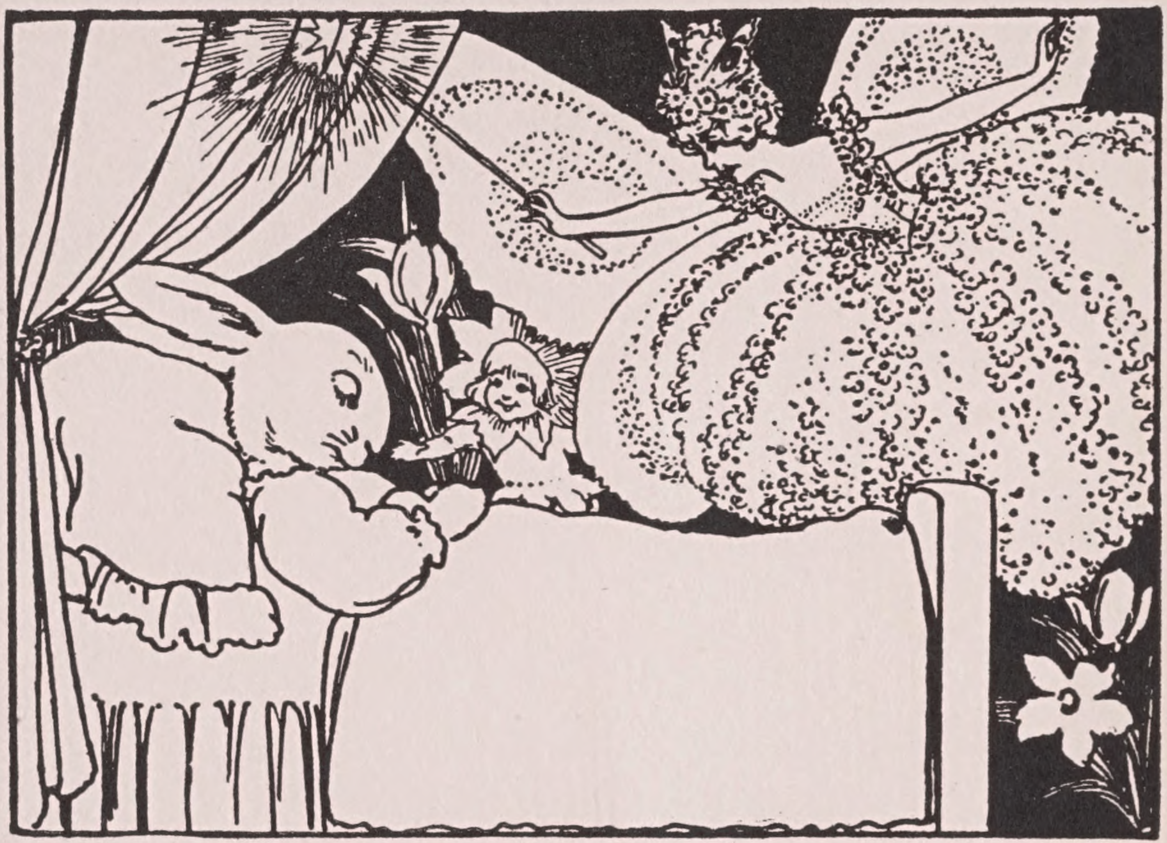
All the Bunnies came trooping in, and Old Father Bun did not have his quiet smoke, and Old Mother Bun did not knit her heel and toe, but they had a merry time, and the most delightful thing was still to happen!

After they had brought in hampers of good things, a great wagon drove up, and in it was a wonderful garden seat.

The Bunnies set up a shout.

"Good bye, good bye, 'till next we meet;
Old Mother Bun, here is a garden seat.
We wish you many happy hours,
In the Garden with your Flowers."

All the Bunnies went homeward.



Said Old Mother Bun, "Good bye, good bye;
To be happy I always try."

She looked at Old Father Bun who took a puff at his pipe, saying,

"Good night, but I give all fair warning,
We'll meet in the Garden to-morrow morning."

Mother Bun nodded her wise old head
And dreamed of Elves in the Tulip Bed;
She said, "The story is done, my dear,
But I'll plant a new garden every year."

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